

BAHÁ'Í: INDEXES

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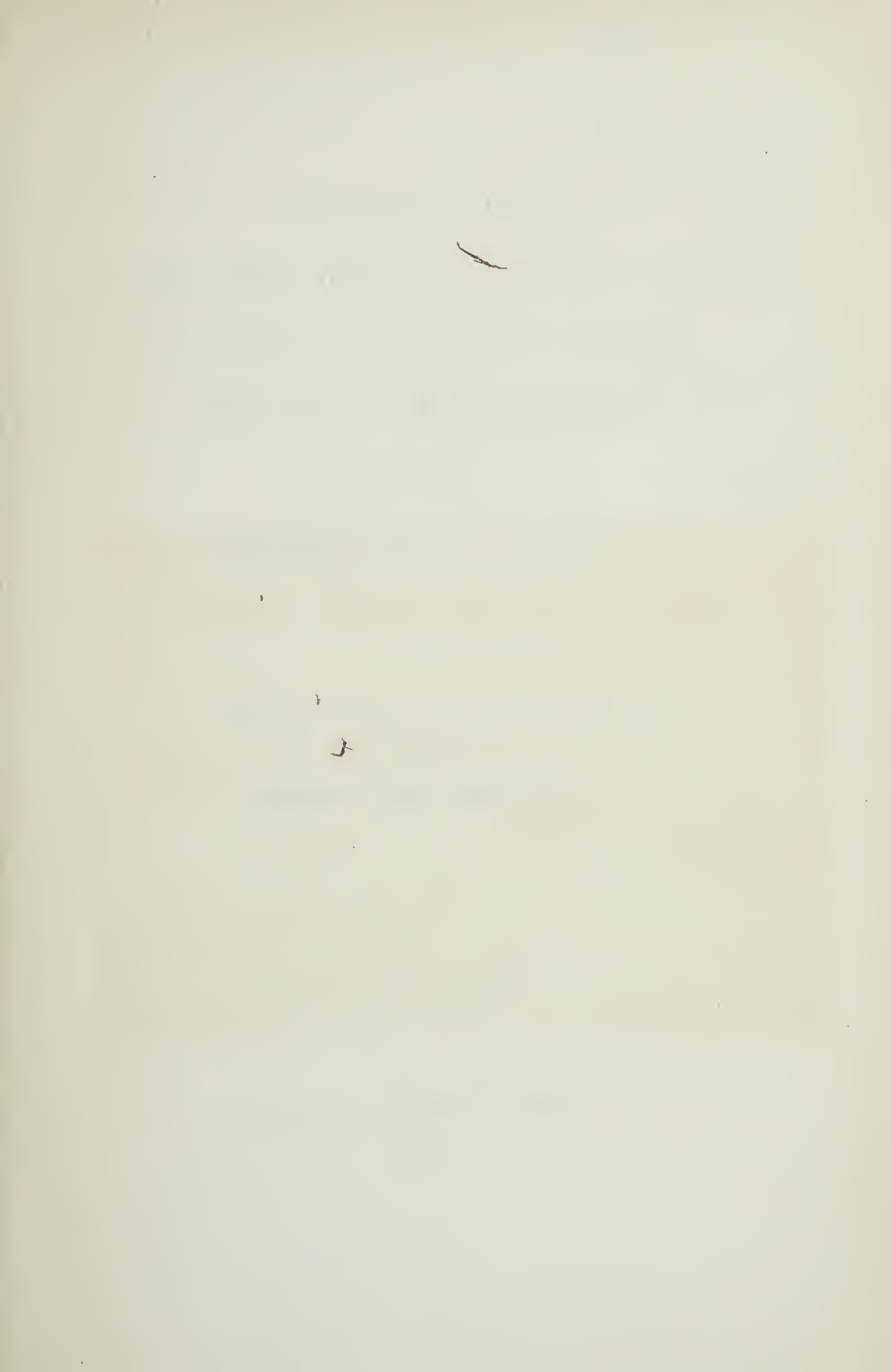
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SUGGESTIONS  
FOR THE ARRANGEMENT OF  
A BIBLIOGRAPHY AND  
REFERENCE INDEXES  
OF THE  
BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS

WITH PRACTICAL EXPLANATIONS  
OF HOW TO BUILD UP  
BAHÁ'Í INDEX SYSTEMS

BY  
CHARLES MASON REMEY

1923

*Approved by the  
National Bahá'í Reviewing Committee  
of America*



## PREFACE

At a recent meeting of the National Spiritual Assembly of Bahá'ís of America, held in New York City about a week ago, the need was deeply felt for a greater and more profound knowledge of the Holy Teachings, in order to carry out the instructions and exhortations of Shoghi Effendi, to teach the Cause. Plans were discussed for the development of teachers among the assemblies, whose mission will be to attract and quicken the people and to instruct them in the divine principles.

As I left the gathering, my heart and mind were filled with the thought of the herculean task before us — that of awakening a materialistic world to the spiritual reality of God's kingdom. Therefore, I decided to tender the following article, which was written some time ago, in the hope that the systems of indexing and classifying of Bahá'í subjects, therein described, might be of service to the friends in their preparation for Bahá'í teaching.

Several years have passed since this work was undertaken, during which time Index I°, herein described, has been enlarged and developed to a point where I hope it will be of general service to the Cause. In this enlarged work, I have had the hearty cooperation of several of the Bahá'í friends. Mrs. H. Emogene Hoagg, assisted for a time by Mrs. Pauline Hannen, did a great deal of work upon this index, and latterly, Miss Jessie Revell assisted by her sister, Miss Ethel Revell, has gone over the index, checking up the grouping and the classification of the excerpts and notes, while Mrs. Isabella D. Brittingham has rendered valuable assistance in suggesting the arrangement of some subjects.

These friends have labored long and untiringly, and it is my cherished hope that in the not distant future it will be arranged so that the results of their labors, this Compilation Index, will be in print and available for the use of the many students of the Bahá'í Cause.

CHARLES MASON REMEY,  
Newport, Rhode Island,  
21 September, 1923.





SUGGESTIONS FOR THE ARRANGEMENT  
OF A BIBLIOGRAPHY  
AND  
REFERENCE INDEXES  
OF  
THE BAHÁ'Í TEACHINGS

As the Bahá'í Cause grows in numbers, there is constant increase in questions of vital importance, to be met by the friends. Therefore, each day, we are realizing more and more the necessity for a thorough and systematic study of the Word of God as the source and foundation of the spiritual guidance necessary to meet these mighty problems which now surround and bombard humanity, bewildering the world's greatest thinkers, philosophers, and statesmen.

In the daily professional pursuits of life in the material world, one spends years of study and training in preparation for his work, and even then it is difficult to attain to the standard which the world demands, and which one desires for oneself. This being the case in these material pursuits, how much more important and necessary is it that in teaching and proclaiming the Bahá'í Message one should study deeply the Holy Words and divine teachings, in order to be prepared to educate the people of the world in this most all-important subject — the Religion of God!

It was for my own personal convenience in studying the Bahá'í Teaching, and with the hope of helping others, that I first evolved a simple bibliography, and a system for compiling and indexing references bearing upon the facts and principles of the Cause. This classification made it possible at any moment to place my hand upon references to any subject under consideration.

As this bibliography and this index expanded in scope, their usefulness increased proportionately, until it occurred to me that

this system might be of service and value to others in making and arranging their references as it has proved to me. Therefore I am writing this description which may be helpful to others.

In several of our assemblies, classes have been formed for the instruction of Bahá'í teachers, and assembly reading rooms or headquarters have been established where reading matter is obtainable, and where, at stated times, a teacher may be found to welcome inquirers and explain to them the teachings. These Bahá'í rooms are supplied with more or less complete sets of Bahá'í publications, often arranged in the form of circulating libraries. One can readily see the advantage to the work of teaching that it would be if, in each of these headquarters, a bibliography and a reference index of Bahá'í books were installed. This need has not been so great in the past as it will be in the future, for each year our supply of Bahá'í publications increases, so it is but a matter of time when some such arrangement will be as much of a necessity as are catalogues for readers in libraries.

## BIBLIOGRAPHY

Since so much of the terminology and thought of the Bahá'í Cause, translated from the symbolical language of the Orient, comes as a new message, as it were, to the ear and the mind of the western world, many of the books contain special information of importance on various vital subjects, the existence of which could never be guessed from their titles. To meet this problem brief bibliographical sketches of the contents of the various Bahá'í publications can be prepared with the view of informing the new student, in as few words as possible, of the topics treated and the general contents of the books under consideration. The inquirer who, for the first time, may look over the list of books is often perplexed to know where to begin reading, and in which order to arrange his studies.

It should be the endeavor of the bibliographer to arrange and word these brief summaries of the contents of these books so that the seeker may be led to select for reading those volumes which contain the spiritual thoughts and elucidations most suited to his or her own particular needs of the moment. The most comprehensive Bahá'í bibliography so far published is the leaflet put out by the Bahá'í Publishing Society giving a list of their



publications together with a very brief description of their general contents. Here is the foundation for constructing a more elaborate Bahá'í bibliography.

The card index system is the most convenient and efficient form in which to arrange a bibliography. In the upper left-hand corner of the index card, type the name of the author, below this the name of the book, and below that the description or digest of the contents of the work. Then a second set of cards can be typed reversing the order of the author and title of the book, placing the title first and the author's name second. When all of these cards are arranged alphabetically, any work can be located, either under the name of the author or under the name of the book. For obvious reasons, it will be found advisable to have two divisions in the classification of these cards, one for Revealed Writings, and the other for the books from the pens of Bahá'í apologists.

## INDEXES

As knowledge of the Cause increases among the Bahá'ís, and as more people become interested in the study of this religion, the need of a general index becomes daily more evident. One is often sure that he has read something from the Holy Words upon a certain subject, but he cannot recall just where it was seen, or exactly what it was, and in vain he seeks a clue to it. Consequently, a key to the Bahá'í literature is required. There is always an immense amount of information and facts, with which it is not absolutely necessary to burden one's memory, but which one would like to find readily when desired, and for those who reason and work thus, an index will soon prove to be indispensable.

In common usage an index is merely an encyclopedia of references rather than one of direct information, yet in my arrangement of indexes of Bahá'í books, I felt it would be of greater value if, with the references, were combined quotations from, or digests of, the information in question. While this greatly increased the volume of the work and the labor of indexing and compiling, it has also enhanced the value of this work of reference by eliminating the labor required to look up references in order to get a comprehensive idea of the treatment of the sub-

jects, which the mere reference to author, work, and page would not give.

The wisdom and knowledge of the Bahá'í teachings may be considered under two phases: the esoteric or mystical, and the exoteric or the definite philosophical thoughts. The inner, deeper appreciation of the spiritual beauty of the teaching or wisdom, which develops the latent spiritual powers of the soul and gives one that divine consciousness peculiar to those who live the life of the Kingdom, can well be said to be the esoteric or inner aspect of the religion; whereas the direct, formulated ordinances, statements of spiritual principles or laws and exhortations, which are expressed in definite terms or thought or knowledge, can be said to be the exoteric or the outer substance.

The esoteric wisdom, which is the result of the exoteric study and knowledge, and the living of the life, cannot be indexed or expressed definitely in so many words upon paper, for it is recorded only in the hearts and lives of faithful, spiritual souls. A Bahá'í bibliography and compilation indexes, therefore, can, perforce, deal directly only with the knowledge of the exoteric teachings and objective facts of the Cause, and but indirectly with the esoteric wisdom. But as one ponders over the divine thoughts and pearls of spiritual knowledge, one finds the line of demarcation between the esoteric and the exoteric to be ever shifting, and not well defined, due to the change and development in the spiritual consciousness of the individual soul, as from day to day one follows the path of El Abhá, growing in spirit, knowledge and wisdom.

With an ever increasing number of facts and subjects, definite knowledge for each person must fall under two general categories: first, material which is retained in the memory; second, that which is not carried in the mind, and for which one depends upon recorded data. Even the most erudite, because of human limitations, cannot carry in mind all of the Bahá'í knowledge, and the facts related thereto. As we study the teachings, it becomes imperative that we should know exactly where to find information upon any subject when we need it.

The card-index system is the most advantageous form in which to handle indexed matter. The obvious advantage over



other systems is that it admits of being rearranged and expanded or reduced in volume without inconvenience. Such systems are now almost universally used in all kinds of operations where classified information is desired.

Already some of the friends have worked out their own systems for indexing and classifying the Bahá'í writings under subjects, but for the service of those who have not yet adopted a system and contemplate building an index, the following suggestions may be found helpful.

Rules are needed and should be rigidly adhered to in the building of an index, in order to maintain uniformity. Uniformity here is very necessary, since those who use the index easily accustom themselves to one system, and, after a certain amount of experience with that system, they will find it becomes an automatic, mechanical, mental action which requires but a minimum of thought energy. On the other hand, in an index where the system is changing and shifting, the mind of the student is continually harassed by the lack of uniformity, and thus much mental energy is consumed and wasted.

When arranging an index for books or pamphlets, for a special collection of manuscript matter, or cataloguing a collection of manuscripts, or arranging the same in index form, the system used should be clearly and carefully described and recorded or written out, and attached to the index, to form a key to the system, so that a student desiring to make use of the index may become easily acquainted with the rules of the particular system used without loss of time.

I will explain here, in detail, the rules which I figured out for the arrangement of my indexes. Cross-indexing of topics and subjects and other special arrangements will occur to a person as he builds his index, for the field and latitude of the work are wide.

For my library I have arranged three different indexes:

I°. A condensed compilation index of practically all of the unindexed Bahá'í books obtainable in English, including the "Star of the West," containing abbreviated quotations.

II°. An uncondensed compilation index of the elucidations and explanations selected from the writings (mostly published, but some unpublished) of various Bahá'í apologetic writers.

III°. An arrangement of Bahá'í subjects and sub-subjects with references suggesting themes and arrangements for Bahá'í articles and addresses.

## I°. A CONDENSED COMPILATION INDEX

Throughout this work I felt myself to be responsible only for the work of indexing, so I did not in any way tamper with or change the text of the books I was tabulating; the idea being merely to arrange this index so as to give easy and direct access to the contents of the works in question. The books to be indexed were taken, one at a time, and carefully gone over, page by page and paragraph by paragraph. Each leading thought was written out in brief on a card, in the form of a quotation when taken from the Revealed Words of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, often with elisions indicated by a series of dots, and in the form either of a direct quotation or of a summary digest when taken from the words of the Bahá'í apologetic writers.

In the upper left-hand corner of the card was written the subject, below this the name of the author, then the name of the book, and below that the page upon which the thought appears. In the case of a quotation from the Holy Writings appearing in a book written by one of the Bahá'í apologists, the name of the author of the book appeared in parentheses directly below the name of the book.

After each of the books had thus been carefully gone over, and the cards checked up and verified, the cards referring to the Revealed Utterances of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá were separated, one from another, and from those of the Bahá'í apologetic writers, thus dividing this compilation index into three divisions or parts: 1, Bahá'u'lláh; 2, 'Abdu'l-Bahá; 3, the Bahá'í apologists. Each of these three series of cards was then classed separately, arranged alphabetically, or in dictionary order, with respect to the subject, the title of book and page, and (in the classification of the Bahá'í apologists) the author. The classified cards were then placed in order in a filing cabinet, and the index was ready for use.

If any one should desire to arrange a card index for personal use or for that of friends, or for public use in an assembly read-



ing room or library, I would suggest this method, which is practicable. Although it will entail a certain amount of labor, it will be found to be not only of present advantage, but will possess an increasing future value as well, because in the card form, an index can always be kept up to date by adding references to new books as they appear, and in addition to these references to printed books, one may also arrange the index so as to include whatever unpublished material one may have in manuscript form.

In addition to the books and pamphlets put forth by the Bahá'í Publishing Society, there are many other pamphlets and leaflets, containing valuable teachings, which have been published at home and abroad. When collecting a Bahá'í library, one will find himself in possession of some of these miscellaneous publications, many of which are no longer procurable through the source of their publication, and can only be found here and there, as one may run across them. These, when in pamphlet form, can be indexed in a manner similar to that of the books herein described, and even the leaflets and folders and manuscript matter in bound form can also be indexed in a similar way. With the printed folders, leaflets, and loose manuscripts, however, a practicable way is to mount them in a bound scrap-book, the pages of which are numbered. Such an arrangement can be extended to several or more volumes, which can be numbered, or otherwise designated one from another, thus making it easy to index this miscellaneous data in the same manner as one would index that contained in books and pamphlets, the only difference being that in this particular case there will be only this one unique volume; whereas, in the case of books and pamphlets, the index is good for every copy of each edition indexed.

The standard size of cards used quite universally in libraries throughout the country should be procured. These measure three by five inches. If the index is destined for general assembly or library use, where it will receive frequent handling, only the best grade of linen card stock should be used, as the cheaper qualities of bristol board soon become worn. The same quality of card should be employed throughout, as this ensures greater facility and efficiency in handling. Attention should be given

to the cutting of the cards to an exact and uniform size, for if they vary but a very little in width they will not fit easily into a standard filing cabinet, and if they vary in height some will protrude higher than others, so that a lower one, in between two higher ones, will often be bridged by the fingers in running over the cards and be overlooked. When the index is destined for general use, the cards should be punched and strung on a rod (this keeps them in place), as is customary in public library indexes; the size and position of the hole may be determined after the choice of a filing cabinet has been made, of which there are various standard types.

## II°. AN UNCONDENSED COMPILATION INDEX

This index has been constructed upon the same lines as Index I°, just described, save that here I have included entire quotations upon the various subjects. This necessitated a larger index card than 3 x 5 inches, so I chose one 5 x 8 inches, which fits into a standard index cabinet of that size. In cases where the dissertation was too long for a single card, follow cards were arranged; the same alphabetic classification was adhered to here as in Index I°; namely, subject, author, book and page. This system developed from a general classification which I began making some time ago, of various articles written by the friends, first, from manuscript and clippings from papers and pamphlets, then from the books handled by the Bahá'í Publishing Society. It is my hope eventually to index all of the revealed words obtainable in an index of this type, but for this work much time is required.

In my work I found it often advantageous to mount clippings from articles and pamphlets, and in many cases even whole pages of printed text upon the index cards — a practice which one often finds resorted to in library catalogues.

For this I used flour and water paste, in preference to the prepared pastes on the market. The following recipe will be found good for this purpose: One cup of best wheat flour, three cups of cold water, one-fourth teaspoonful of powdered alum, four grains of white arsenic. This is beaten until free from lumps, and then boiled for ten minutes in a double boiler. When cold, remove the scum from the top and beat up well. When one has clippings to mount, dampen the slips and place them on a



horizontal surface, face down, and apply a thin coat of the paste with a brush. Then carefully adjust each one on a card, taking care to place the clipping straight on the card, and all at the same distance from the left-hand edge of the card, allowing a uniform spacing above, in which can be typed the subject, the author, work, and page. By this careful procedure, uniformity will be obtained, which is essential for the efficiency of the index.

When the cards are sufficiently dry so as not to stick together, gather them into packs and place them under weights until they are thoroughly dry. A letter press, if available, will be most convenient, but two boards and a weight will be found adequate. When quite dry they can be arranged and classified in the filing cabinet. For convenience, guide cards can be inserted where desired. These are cards the same size as those of the index, though usually of greater thickness, having a projecting tab above the body of the card, which carries written, or, preferably, printed or typed upon it, the subject of the cards filed behind it. This device facilitates the handling of the cards.

### III°. AN ARRANGEMENT OF BAHÁ'Í SUBJECTS

This is a classified arrangement of subjects, with references, which I have found to be very useful in preparing programs and for addressing meetings. In the upper left-hand corner of the card is typed the thought subject, and below this the sub-subject or subjects if there are any, while below this is worded the opening sentence of a paragraph introductory to the subject, together with references to Bahá'í books which treat of the subject. In case this information cannot be contained on one card, follow cards are used. Such introductory sentences come to one's mind on meditating upon the teaching, while reading the holy words, and, not infrequently, while hearing others speak in meetings.

In order to keep this system a live classification, one should be adding to it all the time. With such a series of reminder cards, arranged in alphabetic order, one can at a few moments' notice select and arrange an outline of thought to be used as notes for a Bahá'í address, while the introductory sentences are a great aid to a speaker to launch him into his subject, for after

the first sentence is out others will follow with ease. In other words, this is a system for reminding one, in a time of need, of thoughts which he thinks out in moments of leisure.

Bahá'í indexes cannot be perfected at the outset. In their building or construction there is a large scope for the exercise of the wisdom, the judgment, and the knowledge of the individual indexer. It will probably be only after years of assimilation of the Bahá'í thought and the living of the life, that people will arise who are thoroughly competent to do this work as it should be done.

## ANNOUNCEMENT

This pamphlet is an offering to the Bahá'í Cause. A limited number of copies for distribution are in the hands of the National Bahá'í Archives Committee, and will be sent to any one applying to the secretary, Miss Gertrude Buikema, 1827 West Roosevelt Road, Chicago, Illinois.

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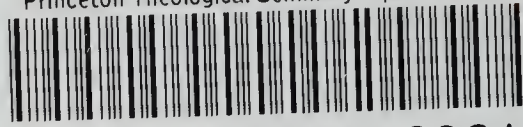
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